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Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF ISAIAH'S CONCEPT OF FAITH UPON THAT OF ST. PAUL

by
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(A.B., San Jose State College, 1933)

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"Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive.
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given,
It is an affirmation and an act
Which makes eternal truth be present fact."

- Hartley Coleridge

"Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a mere borrowed of heaven,
Far less a fleeting fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given,
It is an affirmation and an act
Which makes eternal truth be present fact."

- Hartley Coleridge

Chapter 1

Introduction

Faith has been referred to in many different ways. It has been called "a faculty," "a power," "an appropriation," "a formation," "courage," "an inference," "assurance," "conviction," "a moral state," "a disposition," "a laying hold." We may go back as far as St. Thomas Aquinas who made the following definition: "Faith is the courage of the spirit which projects itself forward, sure of finding truth." [1.] An excursion through the definitions of faith would be a long and exceedingly difficult and tedious one, but it is not the object of this paper. There are, however, several definitions which are current or recent, which emphasize the reality of the term, in contrast to the confusion about faith. It has been classed as creed, dogma, superstition, merely trust or hope, or blind belief. There has been much of credulity and there have been many insults to intelligence.

Matthew Arnold has defined faith as a "power, preeminently, of holding fast to an unseen power of goodness." [2.] G. G. Box defined it as "a trustful appropriation of Christ and a surrender of self to

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1. Slosson, SOC, p. 89

2. St. Paul and Protestantism, Chapter II, quoted in Drake, POR, p. 185

his salvation," [1] holding that intellectual acceptance is not at all the Biblical meaning. Dewey and Tufts said: "Faith is the staking of one's self upon the truth and worth of one's ideal." [2] And similarly Leuba defined Faith as "the formation of a vital partnership with the representative of an ideal (or with the abstract ideal itself) by which life rises to greater intensity, more complete inner harmony and fuller self-realization."[3] More recently Dean Inge has called Faith "the faculty that makes real to us the future and the unseen....frees us from the trammels of time, enabling us to assume a heroic attitude in face of temporal sufferings by regarding events sub specie eternitatis." [4] Rev. Elwood Worcester said, "Faith makes the invisible world real to us, convinces us that the things of the spirit are not fancies, but ultimate realities."[5]

A distinction should early be made between faith and belief, for much trouble has come from confusing the two, for while Faith involves action and is a part of life, belief is a purely intellectual process.

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1. Hastings, DOC, p. 567.

2. Drake, POR, p. 185

3. American Journal of Religious Psychology, Vol. 1, p. 80, quoted in Drake, POR, p. 85.

4. Drake, POR, p. 185

5. Drake, POR, p. 185

St. Thomas Aquinas held that Faith was distinguished from belief, for while Faith was futuristic and activistic, belief was passive, concerning itself with past events. It is possible that the two may not coincide, as in science where faith is put in many things in which belief is found difficult. Faith is had in the facts that two parallel lines meet, a circle is made up of straight lines, space is curved, etc., because by using them, calculations can be carried out to correct conclusions.

Rabbi Harry Levi has said that Faith is a "logical extension or projection of our experience," and that it "carries us beyond our experience into the realm of the unknown." [1.] Just as we go back of reason to tradition, so we go beyond reason to faith. The scientist must act as if certain assumptions are true, even though he can see no reason for them.... faith is the stimulus and guide to action. But Faith does not violate intelligence or thought, it is rather harmony, and prevents there being a mere intellectual belief, which may have no influence on conduct.

"Faith may mean the adoption of a belief as a working hypothesis." [2.] So it is not a belief in alleged facts, but a moral state, a laying-hold through

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1. Skinner, AFP, p. 147

2. Drake, POR, p. 184

the imagination of a higher life. It is not rightly opposed to reason, not a way of ascertaining truth, but a way of holding on to truth that there is justification for believing.

Faith in its highest and moral sense is the believing in and holding on to an ideal against all of the temptations and illusions of the senses. The difficulties are not in the realm of reason---they are moral, not intellectual; subjective, not objective.

What of the marks of Faith? Brown tells us that "worship marks the life of faith wherever it is found," [1.] and that it is God-centered, upward-looking, out-going, self-forgetting. Faith brings release from limiting inhibitions, and makes for adequacy and success. It is difficult to imagine Faith, apart from two foci-------Faith in God, and the effects it has upon him whose faith it is. But the absence of the first we know is possible, for the secular fields have many heroic records of great faith, Columbus keeping steadily his faith in the possibilities that lay before him, Grant before Vicksburg, and Lincoln facing the chaos of a severed country---- all great men have needed a strong faith in their ideals to nerve them and to carry them successfully through.

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1. Brown, GOW, p. 59

Then in the second place, one could scarcely hope to separate Faith from man, for as religion and worship from earliest times have been associated with man, so have they been with Faith; similarly the story of religion is the story of Faith. It is because of the importance of Faith as a factor in the lives and destinies of men, and the eternal significance of conceptions of Faith, with their applications to the lives of men and women of all time, that a study of the faith of great men of different periods of history is made.

It is too easy to broadstroke the elements of men's experiences in religious, political, and social senses, thus losing the consciousness of the uniqueness of their contributions and their conceptions. And so an attempt is made to see two men in very different situations, facing different worlds in different centuries, one dreaming of the Messiah, and the other living for Him. We shall try to see the situations out of which these men came, and the determining influences in their thinking and speaking. These men were products of their ages, but made those same times subject to them, rather than being slaves to the times. As time goes on, we see that men are what they are partially because of their environment------plus-----what has gone before them. Men don't stand isolated from their heritage

and their traditions, nor are they made by those same influences. Rather it behooves us to study with utmost care and consideration such an important phase of living as faith as conceived of by a great figure of Judaism, and a great figure of Judaism and Christianity.

This paper will deal with Isaiah, the son of Amoz, who wrote the greater part of chapters one to thirty-nine inclusive in the book which bears his name. In our study of Paul, the approach to him will be made chiefly through his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, other books being used for minor references.

The study rather easily divides itself into a study of the backgrounds of Isaiah and Paul out of which arose their thinking; and then a study of their conceptions of faith. These divisions then follow in that order, the last chapter being a summary, the conclusions, comparisons, and influences. The literature in these fields is almost endless, as can be seen by a glimpse at the shelves of a library in any of a number of fields of study which this paper includes. And so the object has not been to elaborate or to digress too seriously from the main study, and the trend of the thinking, but rather to state simply, in summary form, the aspects of the topic under consideration. In some of the work

free use has been made of a multitude of sources of information, but because of the nature of it, credit could not be given for every item and aspect. A list of books freely consulted and used is included in the Bibliography, page 106, but in a good many instances actual page references are not made to the books. I acknowledge my obligations to them in general, but where anything specific has been used from an author, a reference is made to him in the immediate connection.

A spiritual and personally appreciative attitude has been taken to some of the material where it seemed both appropriate and necessary, and if the homiletic mind and appreciative soul have stood in the way of scholarship, the writer asks the reader's indulgence and patience.

Chapter 2

"The Historical Backgrounds of Isaiah"

Chapter 2

"The Historical Background of Isaiah"

To understand Isaiah, it is even more important and necessary to know his historical backgrounds than it is to know more of other prophets of the eighth century, B. C. In fact, his ministry and prophecy are so closely connected with the history of his time, that it is almost impossible to separate the one from the other. The biography of Isaiah is the history of his time, and while a general knowledge of the internal condition of the country and its foreign relations may suffice for an understanding of the writings of his predecessors Amos and Hosea, in the case of Isaiah there must be a more thorough acquaintance with the events at home and abroad. The biblical narratives have been illustrated and supplemented from outside sources, especially through the decipherment of the Assyrian inscriptions.

The dominant political fact of the time was the growth and expansion of the great Assyrian Empire, which extension began just previous to the beginning of Isaiah's ministry, with the accession of Tiglath-pileser III in 745, and carried on to a conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon in 672 B.C., shortly after

Isaiah's time. The smaller nations of Western Asia were helpless in comparison with the power and strength of this advancing kingdom. It is certain that they could not have withstood that power as separate countries, and they did not have stability of purpose to present a united front to the common enemy. But the two Israelitish kingdoms, from their geographical positions, ought to have been among the last to come into conflict with Assyria, and it would seem that if they had kept away from political entanglements, they might have enjoyed for a longer time a certain measure of freedom. But the policy of the rulers then (like that of many in history, down to the present) was short-sighted, and took cognizance of only the contemporary and the immediate, and we have the story of relations with the Assyrian Empire which were compromising and disastrous.

Before we see the trends of the Assyrian empire in its expansion, it is necessary to see the conditions in Judah and Israel at the time of Isaiah's ministry. In Judah the supremacy of the House of David had never been seriously opposed, and a benign stability had prevailed in all affairs, establishing a doctrine of legitimacy. Under the strong rule of Rehoboam the bounds of the empire almost reached

those of David's conquest, [1] and tribute flowed into the country from the states which had been conquered. And under Uzziah, Judah appears to have been nearly as prosperous. Edom had been conquered, and the Red Sea port of Elath had been restored, [2] and thus the caravan trade with Southern Arabia was secured. The revenue obtained from this source seems to have been applied to the development of the natural resources of the country, and to the improvement of its military features.

Uzziah was a vigorous ruler, whose reign of about 50 years was a period of power and splendor for Judah. There was a change, however, when his grandson, Ahaz ascended the throne in 735 B. C., for this young monarch was a perfect type of oriental despot, capricious and extravagant, profligate and cruel, enforcing his will as law. But these years of Isaiah's ministry were years of splendor and of prosperity. Expensive cedar was used in building, rather than the less costly woods which had been used before, [3] the land was full of silver and gold, and treasures. [4]

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1. I Kings 14:25
2. II Kings 14:22
3. Isaiah 9:9-10
4. Isaiah 2:7

And if Isaiah 3:18-23 is genuine there can be seen the growth in luxury in female attire, typical of the great wealth of the eighth century.

But with this outburst of material prosperity there was an aggravation of the social evils which seem inseparable from oriental systems of government. The wealth made certain economic changes, affecting the people as a whole, against which the prophets had protested continually. There was an increase of debauchery and of selfish luxury among the upper classes, orgies of feasting and drunkenness[1.] as consequences of the increased means of enjoyment which came to certain classes because of the impoverished condition of other groups. There were common and serious evils from the accumulation of capital by a few, one of which was shown by the rise of great landed estates.[2.] This meant the creation of a destitute and landless lower class by the expropriation of the old peasant proprietors, who had long been the strength of the state. But the methods used to bring about these contrasts and differences aroused indignation. There was no end to the systematic abuses of the forms of justice, corruption of the judges, sharing the spoils, and the companionship of thieves against the widows and the fatherless.[3.]

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1. Isaiah 5:11-12

2. Isaiah 5:8

3. Isaiah 1:23; 3:14, 15; 5:23; 10:1, 2; 29:21.

It is no wonder that the prophets denounced the oppression and the injustice, the licentiousness and the avarice which prevailed at this time. But weren't these, many of them, at least, permanent features in the life of the Hebrew Commonwealth, and wouldn't they have attracted the attention of prophets of any period? Yes, that may be true in part, but it is sure that they were aggravated by the social conditions of the age of Uzziah and shortly after.

In the many evidences of nation declension and disorder the prophets read the premonition of a terrible day of judgment, but they were"voices crying in the wilderness," for the classes which governed in Samaria and Jerusalem did not share any anxiety. In both capitals there was a spirit of false optimism and of careless security, in contrast to that of the prophets. But about the time when Isaiah began his work, there were events which somewhat dispelled these ideas, and danger was brought to the very doors of North Israel.

But while the great Assyrian conqueror, Tiglath-Pileser hovered over their heads, the small kingdoms in confusion fell on one another. Rezin and Pekah, the kings of Syria and Ephraim, took advantage of the weak, unpopular government of Ahaz, who had ascended the throne in 735 B. C. This event which first roused

the politicians of Jerusalem from their dream of security, the Syro-Ephraimitic War seems to have commenced before the death of Jotham [1.] but the startling development which caused the consternation in Jerusalem followed the accession of Ahaz.

Ahaz was no man to deal with the situation, and in his panic-stricken imagination, all considerations of national honor and political prudence were overridden by the immediate peril, and he decided to throw himself on the protection of the king of Assyria. There is here a question as to the wisdom of such a procedure. Some modern historians have defended it, saying that it is what any statesman would have done under similar conditions. But we can't help but feel the sagacity of Isaiah, who considered Ahaz at this juncture to be playing the part of a craven. If he had a calmer view of the situation, he would have been convinced that the danger was not so great that it demanded a counsel of despair. "I am thy son and slave, come up and save me from the King of Damascus and from the King of Israel" [2.] wrote Ahaz to Tiglath-pileser. He came....Israel was conquered in 734 B.C., Pekah was executed, and two-thirds of the country was annexed....Damascus was conquered in 732 B. C., Rezin

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1. II King 15:37

2. CPI, Cornill, p. 63, also II Kings 16:7

was executed, and all of the country was annexed. Ahaz' tribute and offer of submission did not bring any substantial advantage, for although Tiglath-pileser responded to the appeal by ravaging the Northern and Eastern districts of Israel, he probably would have done this on his own initiative anyway. There then is a question as to whether deliverance by voluntary placement under Assyrian protection was the wisest and most sagacious way out.

Thus Judah came under the yoke of the king of Assyria, which surely was not an easy one, by a deliberate act of her sovereign, and it was long before the evil consequences of this fatal step became fully apparent. But once that Ahaz had chosen the path, he was loyal and unwavering in his unsought submission to Assyria, and kept Judah quiet and peaceful, amid war, uproar, murder, and plunder. When he died he bequeathed the legacy of political servitude and a galling tribute to his son and successor Hezekiah. This change was the signal for outbreaks on the part of the nationalist party and of the Egyptian intrigue which was constantly fomenting disaffection toward the Assyrian government. There is no evidence that Hezekiah was involved in any treasonable negotiations at this time,

although there must have been pressure brought to bear on him to join the conspiracy. The efforts of the Egyptian party were successful in Samaria, and Hoshea, the last king, opened communications with Sevé of Egypt, renouncing his allegiance to Assyria by witholding the annual tribute. After a siege of three years, Samaria was captured about 721; the kingdom of the Ten Tribes being incorporated into the Assyrian Empire. [1.]

Although the siege of Samaria was begun by Shalmaneser, it was brought to a conclusion by Sargon, who succeeded to the throne in 722 B. C. Sargon was one of the most powerful and most sympathetic, one of the noblest rulers which Assyria ever had. He triumphed and won his victories with a brilliance which was rarely seen. During the first years of his reign while he was dealing with Babylon, the smouldering insurrection in Palestine suddenly assumed such formidable dimensions as to threaten the territory gained by Tiglath-pileser. But in 720 B. C. Sargon marched west, and so crushed all opposition that for nearly 10 years he seems to have had no more trouble there.[2.] He finished this very successful campaign by defeating the allied Philistine and Egyptian troops at the battle of Raphia..the first armed collision of the rival powers of Egypt and Assyria.

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1. II Kings 17:3-6

2. Skinner, TCB, p. xiv

During these troubles Judah had maintained an attitude of neutrality which probably was partly due to Isaiah's influence with the court. The first indication of the growing restiveness of Judah occurs in an inscription of Sargon relating to the year 711. The focus of the conspiracy on this occasion seems to have been the Philistine city of Ashdod, against which an expedition was dispatched by Sargon.[1] When that city fell, the insurrection collapsed. Hezekiah appears to have withdrawn from the league, or to have renewed allegiance, but he escaped the vengeance of Sargon.

The last period in Isaiah's long ministry was the most eventful one. During the early years of Sennacherib's reign, which began in 705 B. C., Hezekiah's advisors felt that there was a favourable opportunity for a determined effort to shake off the yoke of Assyria. Sennacherib had a formidable opponent in Babylon, Merodach-baladan, who had been subdued by Sargon after many years of effort. This Chaldaean rebel established himself once more as king of Babylon, a thing which seriously embarrassed Sennacherib, and had an important influence on the course of events in Palestine. There is little doubt that the Ethiopian embassy was sent by Tirhakah about

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1. Isaiah 20:1

this time. The temptation proved irresistible, Hezekiah's scruples were overcome, Isaiah's remonstrances being over-ruled by the influence of the Egyptian party in the court, and Judah was committed to rebellion by the conclusion of a treaty with Egypt.

When he had taken the irrevocable step, Hezekiah acted with spirit and energy, and began to strengthen the defence of his capital, in part by enlisting a force of Arabs and other mercenaries for the garrison. Sennacherib defeated Merodach-baladan, and so was able to turn his attention to the state of affairs in the West. In the inscriptions of Sennacherib, the campaign is divided into four stages:[1] 1. the subjugation of the Phoenician cities, 2. the chastisement of Tsidqa, king of Ashkelon, 3. the operations against Ekron, and 4. the invasion of Judah. The first two may be passed over as not having an immediate bearing on the subject. The people of Ekron had deposed their king Padi, and sent him in chains to Hezekiah. Before Sennacherib could begin the siege of the city he had to fight a large group of Egyptians and Arabs who were marching to the relief of Ekron. Sennacherib claimed a decisive victory, but because of the omission of an enumeration of the spoils, we have reason

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1. Records of the Past, New Series Vol. 6, pp. 80 ff.

to believe that it was a none too important battle. The Egyptians failed, in that Ekron was speedily reduced, and stern punishment was meted out to the ringleaders of the rebellion.

There next followed the operations against Judah, which are given in Sennacherib's own words, and in an account which corresponds to this in II Kings 18:13; 19:37.[1] We are immediately impressed with their remarkable agreement regarding leading features of the campaign. Both tell of (1) the capture of the "fenced cities" of Judah, (2) the investment of Jerusalem by an Assyrian army, (3) the submission of Hezekiah and the exaction of a heavy tribute; and another point is (4) that Sennacherib himself does not claim to have affected the reduction of Jerusalem. There is one important difference, however, and that is that whereas Sennacherib represents Hezekiah's surrender as the consequence of the siege of Jerusalem, the Hebrew historian places it before the assault on the capital.

We may assume that after the terms of capitulation had been arranged and after the first siege of Jerusalem had been raised, Sennacherib saw reason to change his mind, and to insist on the absolute surrender of the capital. In view of the position

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1. Isaiah 36-37

which he was in, and the possibility of insurrection, he probably realized that it would be a strategic blunder to leave an important fortress like Jerusalem in the hands of so doubtful a vassal as Hezekiah, who, incidentally, may have been indiscreet and may have shown some hostility.

The steps taken by Sennacherib reveal his eagerness to obtain possession of Jerusalem, and yet his inability to direct the whole force of an army against it. He sent a display of force, but relied on the eloquent tongue of his chief minister, hoping to intimidate Hezekiah by threats, and failing that to induce the people to rise up against him. Hezekiah acted under Isaiah's advice and declined to enter into fresh negotiations, and the officers retired, baffled, to Lachish. A second attempt [1.] to play on the fears of Hezekiah by means of a royal letter met with no better success, and Sennacherib was obliged to proceed southwards, leaving Jerusalem still unreduced behind him.

It is interesting in connection with these actions to realize that the resolute attitude of the king was profoundly influenced by the lofty faith and courage of Isaiah and his confident and reiterated

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1. "Unless, indeed, we have here two parallel accounts of a single occurrence," Skinner, TCB, p. xx

predictions that the Assyrian should not be permitted to inflict the smallest injury on Jerusalem. These anticipations were more than realized when in a single night "the angel of the Lord...smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand," [1.] and Sennacherib was compelled to return to his own hand. The political consequences of this mysterious calamity may seem meagre and disappointing, for Sennacherib survived the catastrophe for 20 years and waged many successful wars, and the deliverance did not permanently affect the relations of Judah to the Assyrian Empire, and the Assyrian monarchs still exacted their yearly tribute from the kings of Jerusalem and treated them as their subjects. But on the other hand, it may be doubted whether Sennacherib was able to enforce the hard conditions which he had imposed on Hezekiah, and the fact that during the 20 remaining years of his reign he never again appeared in Palestine is sufficient proof that his policy was permanently altered by the disaster which there befell him.

But if the crisis is to be measured by the spiritual interests that were at stake, we find that it possesses an importance that cannot be over-estimated. Whatever may be uncertain, it is certain that the

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1. Isaiah 37:36

political existence of Judah was saved from an extinction which was otherwise inevitable. If Sennacherib had gained his object, the people would have been led into captivity, Israel would have perished as a nation, and with it the hopes on which the religious future of humanity depended would have been lost. The inspiration which guided Isaiah throughout his life and the providential interposition which crowned his prophecies with their fulfillment averted this result. The events of 701 form a fitting close to the public career of Isaiah, who makes his exit from the stage of history, and is only glimpsed again through tradition.

Chapter 3

"The Historical Backgrounds of Paul"

In order to gain knowledge of and an appreciation for Paul - the man and his concepts and ideas, we must recognize and keep in mind that Paul was a man of his own age and world. In the centuries which have gone by since that first one, he has become a man of the ages and a citizen of the world at large, but he was, rather, a citizen of the first century, and of the Roman Empire, and belonged to that day and to that world. While he lived in a world under Roman law, yet it was a world profoundly Hellenized, and we must take that into consideration. Then Paul was a Jew, of the Diaspora, a citizen of Tarsus, as well as of Rome. He said that he was a Hebrew of Hebrews [1.] which probably signifies that he was of pure Jewish descent, from a home of zealous Pharisees, having been most carefully instructed in the Scriptures from earliest youth. Finally, Paul lived during the early years of the emerging Christian community, and was influenced by this as well.

So we see four streams of influence, interrelated, of course, but which must be considered as

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1. Philippians 3:5

separate as possible for the sake of clarity. We shall try to see the contributions which Paul's historical backgrounds made to his thinking and writing: the Roman Empire; the Hellenistic world; Judaism; and finally, the emerging Christian community.

Paul was born in Tarsus, a city about halfway between Jerusalem and Constantinople, a free city which possessed certain rights and privileges, including the management of its own finances and the jurisdiction over its own citizens. It was a center of education and culture, and compared with Athens and Alexandria, even being ranked above them in philosophy and general education by Strabo.[1.]

The Jews were scattered to the ends of the Roman Empire (The Diaspora). Philo said that there were a million Jews in Egypt in his day, and that they were numerous in Syria and Asia Minor, and must have constituted a large group in Damascus, for Josephus tells of the slaughter of ten thousand of them there.[2.] These Jews sometimes had the rights of the cities in which they lived, and sometimes had the rights of Roman citizenship. Paul had both, and was not absolutely unique in this. The chief privileges of Roman citizenship were three; trial by Roman courts, freedom from

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1. Strabo, Müller's Edition, p. 574, SLSP Gilbert, p. 3

2. Antiquities 15:7, 2 SLSP Gilbert 4

dishonorable punishments, such as scourging and crucifixion, and the right of appeal to Caesar, within certain limitations. The advantages of these are fairly obvious, especially to one who was a constant traveler, and in danger of coming against the civil and religious authorities. And so Paul was benefitted materially by this protection which he received as the result of his being a citizen of the great Empire of his day. He also had prestige because of his citizenship, and was able to accomplish much more than he would have been able otherwise to have done, and his viewpoints were different from what they otherwise might have been. For it was like religion which through the self-estimate it gives, makes it possible for a person to feel secure, free from fear.

Living within the Roman Empire there were countless other influences which helped shape the mind and soul of Saul, not the least of which was the breaking down of provincialism. Slavery no doubt abounded in Tarsus, and Paul probably got his first conceptions of the world's variety of races from the sorrowful figures of slaves. Through the city also marched soldiers. By commerce the markets of the world were brought before the eyes of those in an otherwise secluded little city on the Cydnus River, twelve miles from the Mediterranean coast. The international, inter-racial

character of his early environment must have given to Paul glimpses of "how the other half lived," which made his attitude toward the new Religion different from the exclusively nationalistic, provincial attitudes of many of his contemporaries. Taking it for granted that Paul's life of renunciation began early, and that there were hostile attitudes because of nationalism and religious tradition, yet we cannot help but think that he was influenced by the cosmopolitan factors in the city in which he spent his early years. The Roman Empire, with its organization - its law and its roads, lent swiftness to the apostle and enabled him to speed the gospel faster and farther. The same qualities of tolerance which the Empire showed toward the Jews and Judaism made the coming of a new religion like Christianity more readily possible.

At the same time that the world was under Roman law, it was even more under the sway of Greek thought and Greek culture. For Rome had become master of the world, only to become captive to Greek civilization. As we have seen, Tarsus, like the cities, Antioch, Alexandria, and Athens, was the seat of a Greek university, and whether Paul attended it or not does not matter, for his boyhood was spent in its atmosphere. Take for instance the language. Greek was the language

of the Empire, and it was practically as good as the native tongue in every country into which Paul carried his work. As the Roman law gave him a citizen's rights, so did the Greek language veritably make him at home in every part. Paul did not need to take with him an interpreter as Peter did, - Peter who traditionally is supposed to have taken John Mark, who was like Paul, a Greek-born Jew. For Paul spoke for himself, and wrote his letters in Greek, even to a Latin Church, Rome.

The Scriptures had been translated into Greek several generations before Christ, into what is commonly known as the Septuagint, the version said to have been made by "the Seventy Interpreters." Thus the Scriptures were accessible to those Jews who did not keep up their Hebrew tongue and also to Gentiles who cared to know them.

But amid a world which was dominated in the fields of philosophy, literature, and education by the Greek civilization the "peculiar people" kept the mark of their peculiarity, their religion. Up and down the Hellenistic world were Jewish synagogues where the faithful gathered to hear the Scriptures read and expounded, and to receive instruction in the faith, keeping them in touch with the temple and the temple authorities in Jerusalem. "More than 150

synagogues of the imperial period are known to us. These modest Jewish synagogues up and down the Hellenistic world were a silent and, the history of religion tells us, extremely effective protest against the worship of images by the polytheistic pagans." [1.] So it was that this young Jew grew up in a Hellenistic age, but in a group which was zealous and ambitious, loyal and faithful. The Jew with his Bible, his synagogue, and his untiring missionary work had done great things in breaking down the strongholds of polytheism, and in preparing the way for the religion of Christ.

In this Graeco-Roman world by the middle of the first century Stoicism was probably the dominant form of thought, though a good many of the highly educated still clung to a modified form of the philosophy of Plato. The Stoics chiefly contributed a theory of physics and a theory of ethics, theories which spread widely, being accepted in many circles where they were not understood. "There seems no reason for thinking that Paul had any real knowledge of Stoic ethics." [2.] Modern studies have shown that he merely used a terminology which is partly found also in circles of the Stoics. So it was that people using Greek, living

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1. Deissmann, SPAS, p. 86

2. Lake, PHH, p. 60

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1. Deissmann, ERAB, p. 86

2. Lake, EHH, p. 60

in a Greek world could hardly avoid this, but the theory of serious Stoic influence on Pauline thought seems to be an exploded bubble.

The influence of Greek literature upon Paul is not as great as sometimes has been thought. If we would take a few consecutive passages from the Christian Clement of Alexandria, writing about 200 A. D., and compare them with the same length of passage from Paul, the contrast will confirm the view that Paul was not an enthusiast for Greek literature. He did not love it as Clement did, and as other men did. Our logical assumption is that he did not know and live in it, but rather that his allegiance and his tradition were elsewhere. His traditions were those of orthodox Judaism, but an open mind in such a world receives impressions from many sources, and he could not use Greek speech unreflectively----it was bound to tell upon him. He was not a man regularly trained in Greek culture----not a product of the schools, not a philosopher, if philosophers pure and simple survived, and philosophy were not merged in ethics and psychology. He met the Greek spirit in Tarsus, city of athletes, rhetoricians and Stoics, and the very fact that his Scriptures were in Greek secured the influence of that spirit. He was a man of the world, but before that he was a young and orthodox Jew.

Paul was born, not far from the date of Jesus' birth, of a family of the tribe of Benjamin,[1] adhering evidently, most loyally to the traditions of their fathers. He came, as has been said, of Pharisaic stock, a "Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee;"[2] with a zeal for all things Jewish in his blood, and an influence in his father's house which was likely to deepen this from year to year. At what age Paul was taken to Jerusalem to receive instruction in the law we cannot definitely ascertain, nor does he mention the circumstances of his going. The data are scanty, but not missing. He writes that he was "as touching the law a Pharisee";[3] "I forged ahead in Judaism beyond many of my own age and race, and I was more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers;"[4] "My manner of life from my youth, from its beginning among my own race in Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me earlier, too, if they were only willing to testify that, according to the most exact sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee."[5] Again, in his open-air speech at Jerusalem, he told the people that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.[6]

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1. Philippians 3:5
2. Acts 23:6
3. Philippians 3:5
4. Galatians 1:14
5. Acts 26:4, 5
6. Acts 22:3

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6. Acts 22:3

He was then evidently a young boy, and if he was sent to Jerusalem when he became a "son of the law," which however cannot be affirmed, then we know his age within narrow limits, but still not absolutely, for the thirteenth year was fixed as the time when a Jewish boy became responsible to do the whole law, after Paul's time. We must be content with the general knowledge that Paul went to Jerusalem to enter upon a course of rabbinic training when he was a young boy. But Paul wouldn't have had to go to Jerusalem to secure this training for there were other good rabbinical schools nearer, Antioch, for instance. What an advantage it was, then, to go to Jerusalem---the Holy City about which the people's dearest traditions clung---with the temple with its imperishible fascination for the Jewish heart. There the elders of great renown, Hillel and Shammai had propounded the Law and the Prophets. If Paul was ambitious to become a rabbi, no place of study could for a moment rival in attractiveness the Holy City.

It is not known why Paul was being prepared to be a rabbi, but he afterward regarded it as providential, seeing in it God's leading. [1.] At any rate, he was most fortunate in his teacher, for Gamaliel was of a kindred spirit, and the most illustrious

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1. Galatians 1:13-16

representative of the school of Hillel. In the Book of Acts, Gamaliel appears as a man of courage, and yet conciliatory; a man of somewhat liberal mind, and the most influential person in the Sanhedrin. His words in favor of a mild policy toward the apostles are not evidence of an inward leaning toward Christianity, but are evidence rather of a fatalistic philosophy. We do not know how long Paul stayed in Jerusalem, but if he completed the prescribed course for rabbinical study, he must have stayed at least twelve years.[1.] There are many faults we can find with the education from our modern points of view, but this thing is sure----the training was thorough and complete according to its own standards; neither time nor labor was to be spared, for the office of rabbi was great and was to be magnified by thorough preparation. The work of the Jewish school was chiefly memorization, and in addition to memorizing the Scripture, the teachers repeated again and again an explanation of a passage, and the scholars were required to commit it to memory. The students were to accept the tradition of their elders. Their thinking was done for them, and their work was not to think, but to accept, to commit to memory and to repeat what their fathers had bequeathed them. Although this method developed wonderful

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1. Weber p. 30, quoted in Gilbert, SLSP, p. 15

power of memory, it dwarfed the reasoning faculties and smothered the imagination. The only chance for originality was through the allegorical method, in which no passage was taken literally, for its apparent statement, historical setting or meaning, but was treated as an allegory, the real meaning and value of which were hidden and mystical, and to be figuratively developed. With such a method one could prove anything, and the rabbis were enabled to find a way of escape in dealing with many a passage where the traditional explanations involved difficulty. Thus they avoided departing from the traditions of their elders, but retained the old and added new treatment to it.

When a student went to the rabbinical school, he showed great honor and respect to the rabbi, higher even than that shown to parents, for he was mediator between God and men, who made known the divine will and helped men to keep it. To the scribe belonged the combined honor and power of king, priest, and prophet, and to receive him was equivalent to receiving the Shekinah itself.

And what was the content of rabbinic teaching? Theoretically, it was the law of Moses, but in reality it was the traditional interpretation of that law. It began with the memorizing of the text, and ended with the memorizing of the vast traditional

interpretation of the text, the latter being considered the more important.[1.] The principle subject in civil law which was discussed was divorce, but the instruction was almost exclusively religious. There was no place for the history and literature of any Gentile people, and no place for art or philosophy, or for such knowledge of science as was then being taught in the contemporary schools in Greece and Egypt. Rhetoric, oratory, logic, and such subjects as might be necessary to the study and teaching of the Law were also included. While it is possible that Paul may have read Greek literature even while studying in Jerusalem, "there is no evidence that Paul as a pupil of Gamaliel was ever instructed in any subject except the Law and its traditional interpretation." [2.]

Looking beyond this time we see that Christianity fell heir to the Jewish Scriptures, with all of their revelations and culture, without which heritage the gospel never could have had the history that it has. The gospel started out with the rich equipment of religious and theological thought, including among other things, the Old Testament, which was the only Scripture the Christians had for several decades. Paul was a devout, diligent Old Testament

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1. Gfroer I, 151, Gilbert SLSP p. 16

2. Gilbert, SLSP, p. 16

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1. Glover T. R., Gilbert Edit p. 16

2. Gilbert, Edit, p. 16

student who knew his Bible, and when he became a Christian he never ceased being a pious student of it, sharing the conviction of his people that it was the particular revelation of his God to his people. We should expect to find rabbinic ideas and rabbinic modes of thought in the Christian Paul, for although in some fundamental things his views were totally changed by his conversion, yet he remained a Jew. He retained his Pharisaic zeal for God, and the heritage of his Jewish home and school is shown in his thought to the end of his life. He draws from Jewish tradition, communicating things not found in the Old Testament, giving, for instance, the names of the magicians who withstood Moses,[1.] and he says that the Law was mediated by angels.[2.] He refers to these points just as the rabbi might have done, and makes no distinction between tradition and the Old Testament. As Paul had been trained in the rabbinical exegesis, he freely made use of it. Thus Sarah and Hagar are two covenants. Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and Sarah is the Jerusalem which is above.[3.] Then, there are many evidences of rabbinic or Jewish color, for example, in his angelology and eschatology. He knows, in common with the rabbis, of several orders

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1. II Timothy 3:8

2. Galatians 3:19

3. Galatians 4:22-25

1. II Timothy 3:8

2. Galatians 3:19

3. Galatians 4:22-26

of angels, good and bad, departing from Jesus in the prominence he gives this subject, but giving it far less space than most Jewish writers of the time. In his eschatology there are elements which are based neither upon the Old Testament nor upon the teaching of Jesus. Thus, by the side of the Christian teaching that the believer at death departs to be at home with Christ, in a body conformed to the glorious body of Christ,[1.] we find passages which speak of the resurrection of the body, which are in form at least materialistic.[2.] Yet, as a whole these Jewish and rabbinic elements in Paul's writings are exceptional and incidental, and should not surprise us with their presence, but rather because they are not more numerous.

Thus in Paul's technical use of the Bible we recognize the student of Gamaliel, though in the light of his revelation in Jesus he found new meanings. From the strictest sect of the Pharisees he took lessons in missionary zeal and devotion to a cause. It was also through them that he was prepared for faith in the resurrection, and on several occasions made appeal to the fact that he shared their belief in the resurrection.[3.] He shared their belief in spirits,

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1. Philippians 1:23, II Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 3:21

2. I Thessalonians 4:16, 17

3. Acts 23:6, 26:6-8

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1. Philippians 1:23, II Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:21

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3. Acts 23:6, 26:6-8

angels, demons; and theirs, too, was the conception he had of nature, heaven, hell, earth, history, sin, judgment, and other items of his theological training. He never felt called upon to discard these inherited ideas, for the heritage was great, and he did not despise it.

Paul's heritage, and therefore the debt of Christians to Judaism was a very noble one----outstanding among the items being the truth of the one true God. "This is the supreme contribution of Judaism to Paul and to the world."[1]. Polytheism and pantheism were the twin curses of contemporary religion, but the Jews had no doubts about the reality of God, his eternity, his universal rule, and his absolute power. Unlike Greek thought, the center of Judaism was not a philosophy, nor the unity of the universe, but God, personal, final, and supreme, Maker of heaven and earth and of man, Lawgiver and Judge. Morality, the bounds of right and wrong, were fixed by his decree; and once that was apprehended, there was no more to be said.

Then, the heritage was the belief that God had been revealing himself, particularly, to the Chosen People; these revelations written down were regarded as sacred and inspired writings. These writings dealt

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1. Glover, POT, 34

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1. Glover, 101, 34

with the great religious questions and undertook to tell how a man could be saved, and inculcated zealous devotion to God and to his service. They abounded in promises and hopes, and told of a better day, and of the coming of a Messiah who should deliver the nation from its oppressors, thus realizing the fairest dreams of its prophets, priests and kings.

Summing it up, what was the heritage? It was the belief in monotheism, inspiration, revelation, salvation, and the Messianic hope. When a man or a cause starts with such a heritage, there is a very enviable beginning!

There are two facts which are indelibly engraved upon the history of the first century. The first is that Saul of Tarsus persecuted the early Church; and the second is that he afterward became a most zealous and successful herald of the Gospel. How he was transformed is more or less disputed, but it is comparatively incidental. That he was transformed is indisputable, and this is the really essential fact. We have more detailed accounts of this event than are to be found regarding the conversion of any other character in Scripture, three accounts in Acts, one in Galatians, and two references in I Corinthians. How this transformation took place is not within the scope of this study,

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which in this section is seeking to point out the contributions of the historical backgrounds of Paul, and in this particular connection, how he was influenced by the emerging Christian community.

The opposition to Christianity at first came largely from the Sadducees,[1] and went no further than imprisonment. Christian believers were loyal to the temple, and so gave no offence to the Pharisees, but Stephen was not content to have the new faith made as narrow as the old. He aroused the same hatred on the part of the Pharisees which had caused the death of Jesus by holding that Jesus taught a spiritual worship, which made legal rites unnecessary to salvation. It was charged that Stephen spoke blasphemous words against Moses and God, and said that Jesus would destroy the temple and change the customs of Moses----the customs of Moses were not essential to salvation. The point at issue between Stephen and his opponents was a vital one to the existence of the Jewish system. Either Stephen and his position must be overcome, or Pharisaism would be undermined and the temple would ultimately perish. Such was the man, and such the position which called out the strength of Paul,

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1. Acts 4:1, 5:17

who tells us that he consented to Stephen's murder.[1] He must have known a good deal about Jesus, even though he never saw him personally, for many of his friends had heard and had seen him, and members of the Sanhedrin had taken some part in the end of his career. It is reasonable to assume that Paul's first information concerning Jesus came from his own friends, the Pharisees, who were disturbed over the activity aroused in the name of Jesus. It wasn't because of lack of knowledge that war was declared upon the disciples, but rather because they knew so much about Jesus and the power his name was exercising.

In addition to the word of friends, Paul could not help but learn through his own actual work of persecution about Jesus and what the Christians were teaching regarding him. For men and women were haled to jail, their only offense being their ministry in the name of Jesus, and when they were given hearings, Paul "strove to make them blaspheme."[2] His attempt to make them blaspheme, give up their faith in Jesus, shows that he must have known their claims in regard to Jesus. Finally, when the vision came, he was so familiar with the story that he did not need to ask who Jesus was or what he wanted.

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1. Acts 12:20

2. Acts 26:11

In addition to learning about Jesus, Paul also had the chance to listen to Christians and to see what their faith was doing for them. He saw lives with new power and character, filled with love and devotion to others, and marked by gentleness and kindness. When their faith was tested, they revealed steadfastness and loyalty----they were willing to suffer for their faith. Theirs was a forgiveness which wasn't taught in the schools of the rabbis, a poise and peace that triumphed over fear and suffering.

Then one day Paul saw one put to death, in fact, he stood by and held the martyr's clothes.[1.] That triumphant death was a still higher revelation to the soul of the young Pharisee of what Jesus meant to men. It seems impossible that he could be unaffected by such testimony, and not compare the Christians with himself.

From the day of Stephen's death, Paul entered into the work of persecution with his whole soul, it being a matter of conscience with him.[2.] He was the leader of the opposition, and made a terrible record in his bloody work. He went throughout Judea [3.] and even outside of Palestine. He told Agrippa that he

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1. Acts 7:58, 8:1

2. Acts 26:9

3. Galatians 1:22, 23

persecuted Christians unto foreign cities, which implies that he made journeys to other foreign cities beside Damascus. [1.] The extent of his work would have required several months for its carrying out, although we can't know definitely. But his success was great. Luke speaks of it as a "great persecution," a "ravaging of the Church," which left no disciple in Jerusalem save the apostles,[2.] who may have been in hiding. If the infant Church could have been annihilated by man, it surely would have been accomplished by the consuming zeal and rigor and perseverance of Paul.

With the rise of the Christian community, we find a dazed and puzzled young Pharisee, impressed by the grandeur of the faith and the character of these Christians, unsatisfied in his own religious experience, questioning, wondering, asking....on a sun-swept road to Damascus. Then, up and down the land, and across the world we see that man burning with a zeal and a fire preaching to Jews and Gentiles----Romans and Greeks; writing to those who were seeking salvation, within the Law and without it; telling of faith and salvation------God.

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1. Acts 26:11

2. Acts 8:1, 3

Chapter 4

"The Concept of Faith in Isaiah"

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"The Concept of Faith in Isaiah"

The Eighth Century Prophets owe their distinction in part to their originality. As Amos was the first to identify religion absolutely with the moral law, and Hosea was the first to make religion fundamentally a matter of love. So Isaiah was the first to formulate as the condition of salvation the great doctrine of faith. Hosea carried back all the sins of the people to one root, evil-----that of unfaithfulness to God. "For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and builded palaces;" [1]. Their making of idols, their immorality, their creating kings, and their seeking for foreign aid are all regarded as apostasy from God.

In Isaiah we find a tendency to reduce the moral and religious life to one underlying principle---faith, and the cardinal sin of Israel is unbelief or pride. This root idea is not developed in nearly so complete a way as that of unfaithfulness in Hosea. The word faith is neither mentioned as often as is love in Hosea, nor are the evils of life ascribed in as direct a way to unbelief as they are to disloyalty to God by Hosea. And yet it is clear to one who

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1. Hosea 8:14

reads and studies Isaiah that his fundamental thought is represented by the underlying principle of faith.

Isaiah's conception of faith received its clearest expression, perhaps, in connection with the political policy of Judah. In this phase, his ministry exhibits him in an entirely new character, that, namely, of a political adviser. In order to appreciate the importance of this fact, we have but to look at the contrast which in this respect he presents to Amos and Hosea. They held the same fundamental convictions as Isaiah; looking forward to a blessed future for Israel after the judgment, and yet they gave no suggestions, and in their writings they give no hint of political direction for the leaders of the state. They took up the negative attitude toward the problems of statesmanship; apparently feeling that the problems were beyond any help which could be given in the way of counsel or guidance. The political function of prophecy had been in abeyance since Elisha, of whom it has been said that he was "the honored mouthpiece of the Almighty a t the courts of six kings. Three called him friend; to them he was worth more than a thousand generals." [1] So it was one of Isaiah's distinctions that he revived this particular function of prophecy, and with such far-reaching effect, as we shall see. He did this, too,

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1. Mead, BB, p. 123

without lowering the high level of spirituality and achievement to which prophecy had been raised by the work of Amos and Hosea, and formulated a definite religious policy by which the nation might be safely guided through the dangers that lay immediately before it.

The maxims of Isaiah's statesmanship were different from those of any of his predecessors, in fact, they were so unique that perhaps it is no wonder that the rulers were mystified. It must be said, however, that the sagacity of Isaiah can be perceived in his attitude toward the policies of his time. The maxims of his statesmanship first come to light in the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion. The politicians of Jerusalem were roused from their dream of security by the activity of Rezin and Pekah. Ahaz was a "scheming politician,"[1] and unfit to deal with the situation. He was panic-stricken, and thought of only the immediate peril which loomed ahead, but the prophet had already announced the issue of the ill-fated alliance between Syria and Ephraim.[2] Because of its attack on Judah, the Northern Kingdom sealed its doom, and both it and Syria would quickly fall prey to the Assyrians who were advancing. Isaiah

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1. Whitehouse, NCB, p. 57

2. Isaiah 7: 1-11

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1. Mulehouse, NCE., p. 57

2. Isaiah 7: 1-11

felt that there would be a brief respite granted to Judah, and with the hope of having this interval taken advantage of in the interest of the nation, he sought under divine direction, a meeting with Ahaz. This proved to be one of the great moments in history, the conflict of two ideals for life.

Ahaz was afraid at the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic war, and went out to inspect the water supply of Jerusalem to make sure that it would not be cut off if there were a siege. Isaiah, accompanied by his son, Shear-yashub--"A-remnant-shall-return," went out there to meet him and to talk with him. His chief concern was to dissuade Ahaz from seeking to save himself from passing danger by placing himself under the protection of Assyria. He assured Ahaz that there was really no cause for alarm, for the momentary peril was really of a trivial nature. The fact that the plans of the nations were evil, opposed to the will of God guaranteed that they would come to naught, and with God as the guardian and protector of Jerusalem, why fear Samaria and Damascus with their human chiefs? So Isaiah urged the king with the weight of his inspired authority to adopt an attitude of wise passivity, renouncing all trust in earthly help and dubious political expedients, relying on God alone to bring success out

of the crisis. "If ye will not believe ye shall not be established" [1] said Isaiah, which in the original is one of his paronomasias, which G. A. Smith has re-interpreted, "If ye will not have faith, ye shall not have staith." [2] "No faith, no fixity," is the way McFadyen renders it, [3] and Box has this rendering: "Verily, if thou have no strong trust----no trusty stronghold shall be thine." [4] It is clearly stated here for the first time as far as we know----that faith is the condition of salvation, so that if Judah was to be saved, it could only be by faith in God. Instead of the security which his presence gave, as typified by "the waters of Shiloah that go softly," there would be a deluge of the overflowing waters of the Euphrates----Assyria; the kingdom to which they had appealed would be the cause of their downfall.[5] Duhm[6] says that this is perhaps the earliest passage that lays stress on faith, and here the direct object of faith is the word of the prophet, which is the word of the Lord. These words mark an epoch in the

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1. Isaiah 7:9
2. Smith, TEB, p. 54
3. Knudson, BLP, p. 151
4. Knudson, BLP, p. 151
5. Isaiah 8:5-8
6. Whitehouse, NCB, p. 130, cf. Stade, Gesch. Israels, p. 594, footnote 2

the history of revelation, for the distinctively religious principle of faith had not previously been exhibited as the touchstone of character and of destiny. Faith here meant trust in the positive revelation of God, and the faith required of Ahaz was the whole-hearted acceptance of God's word through Isaiah. Ahaz was shown that the only path of safety was that which Isaiah's contemporary, Hosea, was a few years later to point out to his Ephraimite countrymen---loyalty to Yahweh, and independence of foreign alliances.[1.] Isaiah had assured Ahaz that all he needed was faith, but child of the dragon's teeth that he was, the king had to have something more than a spiritual principle to bolster him up. The prophet showed how eager he was to bring the king round to a right mind by declaring that God would perform a miracle to convince him of the truth of his message.

But it was all in vain, for Ahaz didn't dare to accept the challenge, and had probably already decided to appeal to Assyria for aid, relying more on the strong material support of Assyria than on the invisible might of God. The fervid appeal of the prophet was to no avail. "So the two men parted, one seeking with fear and trembling the aid of a foreign

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1. Hosea 14:2-4

power, the other buoyed up by an unshakable religious faith." [1.]

A second declaration was made in the time of Hezekiah, when the spirit of revolt against Assyria again broke out under this weak and wavering king. The Egyptian intrigue which was constantly fomenting disaffection toward the Assyrian government opened communications with Egypt, and again Isaiah pleaded for a policy of peace and trust. "This," he said, "is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear." [2.] And so amidst the intrigue and confusion, Isaiah pointed once more to the quiet presence of God in Jerusalem as the one ground of confidence. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation;..he that believeth shall not be in haste." [3.]

In the sphere of politics Isaiah consistently upheld the maxim that the safety of the state lay in abstinence from all attempts to recover its independence and in quiet resignation to the will of God. We have little reason to suppose that the prophet had hope that Judah might, by following the course which he suggested, be spared the disaster of the Assyrian invasion, for he felt that this act of judgment was

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1. Knudson, BLP, p. 136

2. Isaiah 28:12

3. Isaiah 28:16

decreed by Jehovah, and could not finally be averted by any policy, however prudent or religious it might be. Isaiah aimed to prepare the nation so that when the judgment came, as large a section of the nation as possible might experience its salutary effects. So the prophet counselled a patient acceptance of the irksome political situation in which Judah was placed, and an attitude of neutrality in the struggles which many of the surrounding nations were having with Assyria. This was on the surface a different line of action from that which he had urged upon Ahaz in 735, but they were both founded on the one fundamental principle-----faith. Then, Isaiah tried to prevent Ahaz from entering into an alliance with Tiglath-pileser, involving a dishonourable subjection to the Assyrian Empire. Now, under Hezekiah, he sets his face against all schemes for violating that compact by an alliance with Egypt or any other country opposed to Assyria. But the religious motive in both cases was his antipathy to the spirit of unbelief which he discovered in all attempts to effect political salvation by human wisdom, and with the help of heathen states----faithless actions. So he said: "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." [1].

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1. Isaiah 30:15

The first describes the external policy, and the second the attitude of mind, demanded by the occasion. On the one hand averseness to war, renunciation of earthly help and a wise passivity in international affairs; on the other calm reliance on God; and in this last, the prophet says that they have manifested the truest "strength" or courage. Thus is re-echoed the great ruling principle of Isaiah's statesmanship and prophecy----faith.

It was somewhat later, that an embassy came to Jerusalem from Ethiopia, evidently to induce Judah to join in a league against Assyria. It was a perilous time, with the Assyrian armies threatening the westland, and terror and confusion everywhere. But Isaiah remained undisturbed, and sent the Ethiopian ambassadors away with the assurance that he saw no occasion for alarm. "For thus hath Jehovah said unto me, I will be still, and I will look on in my dwelling place, like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." [1] "In this sublime utterance we have the climax of the prophet's expression of faith. What more perfect symbols of the divine calm could be found than the motionless air of a hot summer day and the invisible cloud of dew in harvest time! And what finer and surer

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1. Isaiah 18:4

evidence could there be of the prophet's own unruffled trust than this vivid apprehension on his part of the eternal calm of God in the midst of earth's turmoil!" [1.]

In these passages, either directly or indirectly, Isaiah advocates trust in God as against all political intriguing. Thus the doctrine of faith, we see was first formulated as a political, or rather an anti-political policy. Isaiah held strongly that it was unwise for Judah to enter into entangling alliances with other nations, for such alliances would simply mean ruin to herself. The prudent thing was to accept the status quo, trust in God, do his will, and await the time when he himself would redeem her ---a policy that might well be commented upon as being that of a far-sighted statesman. It is, no doubt true that Isaiah did estimate accurately the political forces of the day, more accurately than the Judean kings and counselors did, and saw the hopelessness of any sort of a revolt against Assyria.

Yet this does not lead us to assume that this policy was advocated simply as an outcome of clear political insight, for it was rather a clear expression of an idealistic faith. Isaiah believed that the spiritual forces and not the material were the

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1. Knudson, BLP, p. 153

really controlling ones in the world, the divine, not the human. A deep religious conviction was the source and substance of Isaiah's political policy--Judah's duty was to obey the will of God, and put herself on his side. For although Isaiah was interested in politics, he was not a statesman, but had his interest because of conditions of his time and his social position. His interest was not that of a man of affairs, but rather that of a seer. In him the practical administrator was overshadowed by the idealist, and basically he was a religious teacher, the burden of whose message was the doctrine of faith. The doctrine was applied most clearly to the political conditions of his time, but was not a political principle with him, "it was a profound personal experience, the mainspring of his life." [1.] As such a profound personal experience, the prophet found his task to be that of bringing the vision to bear as effectively on the life of the people and the nation, as it was upon his own conscience and will.

But the prophet did not find the people anxious to accept his message; instead they rejected it, and this seems to have led to a temporary cessation of his public activity. At this time, then, is the strategic time for the socialization of the concept of

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1. Knudson, BLP, p. 154

faith, and Isaiah "bound up the instructions and sealed the instruction among his disciples." God seems to have withdrawn the guidance of the prophetic word which had been so coldly received. It remains for the prophet, and those who have shared his faith, to wait for the fulfillment of his word, and he appears by this act to separate himself and his adherents from the mass of his contemporaries, and to form a new circle of religious fellowship based on faith in the revelation which had been given. We are certain, at any rate that at this time of general unbelief there was a band of men who were known as "disciples" of Isaiah----it was as a creative nucleus, a community of the faithful.

The history of religions show that the most enduring of spiritual influences are those communicated through the close fellowship of a great personality with a limited number of suceptible minds, or in short, the relationship of master and disciples. It would not be surprising, then, to find this in the life and work of Isaiah, for it was a practical development of Isaiah's fundamental conception of a spiritual kernel within the nation. The "remnant" that should "return" was being somehow formed under the eyes of the prophet in the person of men who detached themselves from a faithless and unresponsive

generation, and placed their lives in keeping with a faith which made for permanence, and stability.

Throughout the prophet's discourses there were two main ideas which crossed each other; one, the necessity for a severe judgment on Jerusalem, in which the city should be reduced to the utmost distress and humiliation, and the other, the certainty that the crisis would end in the destruction of Assyria and the introduction of a glorious era for the people of God. It may be fairly inferred that Isaiah entertained no expectation of salvation for the mass of his countrymen, but that he was saved from absolute pessimism only by his unquenchable faith in an elect "remnant" and by the hopes that sprang from that conviction. The idea of a remnant who would be saved out of the impending doom did not originate in Isaiah, for it is found in Amos[1.] and also in the account of Elijah.[2.] The idea apparently was not a strange one, else the name of the prophet's son would have had no significance, and Shear-jashub---"A-remnant-shall-return" would have had particular significance. Isaiah added new meaning and prominence to the concept, which other prophets had already used. It had double interpretation, the first being that of doom, for a

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1. Amos 5:14 f.

2. I Kings 19:18

remnant, and only a remnant would be saved----the recurrence of the belief that a severe judgment on Jerusalem was necessary. But the other interpretation was the stronger, for the assurance was that the whole nation would not be destroyed----there will be some who will return to God and be preserved. A minority will turn to God; there will be a few who will repent. This hope is mirrored in contemporary hope for the Church because of a small group of consecrated, loyal people.

In this idea of the "remnant" lies the germ of Isaiah's eschatology, and the great ideal of faith became the nucleus for an ever-growing hope. The prophet who himself bore a name which summed up his message and career, gave a prophetic name to his eldest son, which has previously been referred to----- "A-remnant-shall-return." So it is certain that at least by 738 B. C., Isaiah had foreseen the remedial effect of discipline. Judah was to receive chastisement, but a remnant would survive, disciplined by suffering. Although Zion had been faithless [1] and one man oppressed another [2] and dire poverty with desolation would befall all ranks of society [3] yet this trial would purge Zion. The judges would no

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1. Isaiah 1:21

2. Isaiah 3:5

3. Isaiah 3:1-3, 6-8

longer accept bribes[1] but would return to nobility,[2] and Zion would again be "the city of righteousness," "the faithful city."

The knowledge that a spiritual kernel of the nation would survive the successive waves of judgment was constantly present in the prophet's mind, and led him forward in his thinking to an ideal age in which that remnant should blossom out into the perfect kingdom of the Lord. The conversion of the "remnant" should be connected with the special relation of God to Zion, which may be interpreted as being involved in the prophetic name 'Immanuel.' But it is too much to expect that there be perfect harmony in all of the representations which a prophet gives of the future. There is bound to be more or less diversity under varying circumstances.

This we find true with Isaiah when we consider another aspect of his conception of faith, the Messianic prophecies. In some of them the personal Messiah is stressed, while he does not appear at all in others. The religious community seems to be the prophet's view in some, while it is an organized state with judges and counselors in others. Then there is a miraculous transformation of nature, or

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1. Isaiah 5:23

2. Isaiah 1:26

else a seemingly more natural advent of a new order. Isaiah is not to be "labeled" for one final or conclusive conception of the new and transformed Israel of which he dreamed, for at times one aspect appealed to him, and at other times another. But although there was no final conception of the transformed Israel, it was because various aspects of traditional hope appealed to him at different times---and to them poetic expression was given.

The details are matters of little importance, but rather the essential was the conviction that through the faithful in Israel God would work out his own righteous and beneficient purpose in the world.

Among the prophecies one stands out, the famous "Immanuel prophecy."[1] The application of this prophecy to the birth of Jesus,[2] although legitimate from the New Testament point of view, didn't express the strict historical meaning of the passage itself. The word which is translated 'virgin' might be translated as 'young wife,' meaning a young woman of marriageable age. It also seems that an event in the near future is referred to, and not one seven hundred years later. Dr. Knudson[3] holds to the

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1. Isaiah 7:14-17

2. Matthew 1:23

3. Knudson, SLP, p. 162 ff.

opinion that there was a popular belief in the coming of a Messiah, as there was in the eighth century B.C. a popular belief in the election of Israel and in the "day of Jehovah." According to this belief, some well-known young woman was to bear a son, to be called Immanuel, who as a child was to deliver Israel from her enemies. In 7:14 Isaiah says that this child is soon to be born----the Messianic era is about to dawn. But this coming will be marked by ruin and desolation, instead of bringing deliverance to the people. The expected Messiah will be compelled to eat the food of privation, and the land will be devastated. Isaiah here used a device and a plan of action which Amos had used before him. Amos took the popular beliefs in the election of Israel and in the day of Jehovah and turned them against the people, asserting that the election of Israel meant that they would all the more certainly be punished for their sins, and declared that the day of Jehovah would be a day of darkness, not of light, So Isaiah took the popular belief in a Messiah and turned it against Ahaz, and the followers of Ahaz. Immanuel would come, indeed more speedily than they expected, but there would accompany the coming terrible national misfortune. As Amos did not reject the popular beliefs in the election of Israel and in the day of Jehovah, but

gave to them new moral significance, so Isaiah didn't completely repudiate the popular Messianic faith, but gave to it a higher ethical interpretation. The coming of the Messianic dawn would mean ruin to Ahaz and to the unbelieving nation, but to those who had faith ----the faithful remnant the dawn would mean the reign of an ideal King in perfect righteousness and endless peace. Immanuel would be to the faithful the true Messiah.

In light of this, we see the Messianic hope as an aspect of the faith of Isaiah, but surely not a creation of the prophet. Rather he took the traditional belief and purged it of its selfish nationalism, and ego-centric tendencies. Similarly the sanctity of Zion was interpreted not as the actual preservation of the fortress of Jerusalem, but as the spiritual fact, symbolising the safety of those who in times of trial placed their faith in God and his power. Isaiah made the hope in the Messiah the vehicle of a lofty and sublime idealism, and reveals here the significance of his visions of the future. They show his strong, clear, and unwavering faith in the ideal and eternal kingdom of righteousness.

The forms under which he conceived the kingdom were not the final ones, for God had greater things in store---but yet the underlying principle, faith, was

final, for centuries and religious leaders had no ageing effect upon it. The Empires which the prophet knew have vanished from the earth, the race of which he was a member has been scattered to the four winds, and yet the basis and the very essence of true religion is the same-----faith.

Isaiah blazed the trail as he proclaimed faith as the condition of salvation---if men were to be saved, it was only by faith in God. The presence of God gives security, confidence, and rest, through quiet resignation to the divine will. Although necessarily the political aspects of the development of the concept have been dealt with at some length, still faith as a condition of salvation transcends political situations and political systems. There is still need for the first part of the two-fold program, the renunciation of earthly help as opposed to divine help. And this generation, like Isaiah's, and Paul's, needs to learn that calm reliance on God is the truest strength and courage. We, too, have faith, but ask help for our unbelief.

Chapter 5

"The Concept of Faith in Paul"

Paul is spoken of as a religious man, and he was, preeminently that and a seeker after God. His was the heritage of the sentiment of the Hebrew prophets and poets who longed for and cried out after God, who searched heaven and earth to find him, that they might come near him. His constant quest was to find God and to gain his favor, and hope to win salvation by two ways. The first was the fact of his being a son of Abraham, one of the "chosen people," to whom God had given the promises so precious to his people. The second was through the keeping of the Mosaic Law. Although Paul was thoroughly Judaistic in his outlook, he found it impossible to feel that the mere fact of physical descent was sufficient to assure him of God's favor or to free him from a sense of guilt.

Might it not have been possible that there were unfavorable comparisons of himself with the Christians in those days before the Damascus experience, in which he saw that his trust in his pure ancestry was not doing for him what trust in the Crucified was doing for the Christians?

His experience with the observance of the Law was similar, for he found that trust in it did not realize what he had been led to believe that it would do. In place of saving or justifying him, he felt that it only condemned him. [1.] For the Law was the very life and strength of Judaism, under which came all prayer, sacrifice, fasting, and worship, but it had made religion mechanical in character. Under it, religion was reduced to a series of minute legal prescriptions and pious observances ----ritual, ceremony, the paying of tithes, and other such obligations. Thus, man's relation to God was upon a legalistic, business basis. It was in the nature of a bargain which had been driven, whereby God agreed that if men and women would conform to the requirements of the legal code, if they would attend services, say prayers, keep fasts, make offerings, and perform acts of devotion, they might expect salvation in payment. Thus salvation became something to be earned or bought----a mechanical and legalistic conception, which, we must confess with shame, has not entirely disappeared from the world today.

Paul sought ardently for God, and studied the law diligently, but in his "blameless" keeping of

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1. Romans 7:11-13

it, he found bitter disappointment. For there came no sense of satisfaction, no confidence in God, no assurance of pardon. By the endless restrictions and prohibitions, the Law tempted him to transgression, becoming an "occasion to sin," an enemy to entice him-----betraying him, provoking him to sin, and slaying him. [1.] The Law failed him as a saviour, for although it could set ideals and write commandments, telling a man what he ought to be, it could not furnish help or give power to realize or obey these ideals and commandments. It seems to be fairly obvious that to attain these high and noble ideals and precepts unaided, by human endeavor, was hopeless. Thus it was impossible truly to keep the Law, for before that was possible, God's help must be secured. The Law brought no help from God, but only showed hopelessness, and deepened a person's sense of guilt and condemnation. Paul tells of his experience with such a struggle under the Law in The Epistle to the Romans, to show the helplessness of it all and the despair which it brought to him. He says that he found in his life two principles; the one, conscience, drew him toward the good; the other toward evil; the one, his better self, said the Law was good and prompted its keeping; the second,

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1. Romans 7:11

hindered him from keeping it. The good attracted him and he would do it, but he found himself doing otherwise. Thus he needed a helper and a deliverer.[1.]

Paul has been criticized by some who say that the whole intent of the Law was not exhausted in merely bringing the sinfulness of man to manifestation, so convincing them of the need of gracious rescue at the hands of God; that the Law rather aimed to develop a positive righteousness of worth for human society and the divine kingdom. This criticism is not wholly just, for Paul's silence on this matter, is not necessarily a denial. He was checking an attempt to thrust the Law forward into the place of a rival of the gospel. Naturally, therefore, "he considered the Law preeminently, not to say exclusively, in its relation to the gospel, and dwelt upon the fact that its office was fulfilled in preparing for a more potent and gracious dispensation by convincing men of their sinfulness and need." [2.] Over against the partisans of an ultra-legalistic scheme, he considered it important to set forth the incompetency of the Law to reach the supreme end assured, personal salvation. He was passing judgment upon it in relation to this end.

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1. Romans 7:24

2. Sheldon, NTT, p. 218-219

And so it was that in the interests of spiritual religion Paul as a Christian leader, waged uncompromising war with Jewish legalistic conceptions of religion, and prejudices in favor of their own privileged religious position. This latter feeling was deeply ingrained in the Jewish consciousness, threatening to pass over into the growing Christian Church. Against Jewish privilege and advantages. Paul vindicated and maintained the principle that in the domain of salvation there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, and that the Jew has no other righteousness than that which comes through faith in Jesus Christ, [1.] being in this respect in the same position as the Gentile. [2.]

From this position followed two important results in belief: 1. That "no man is justified by the Law," [3.] and 2. That "a man is justified by faith alone, apart from works of the Law." This, then, was the thesis which was developed so splendidly by Paul. The absolute sufficiency of this saving faith is above all shown in the contemplation of its object. "It is because faith lays hold of Jesus Christ, who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised

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1. Galatians 3:7 f.

2. Romans 3:30 f.

3. Galatians 2:16, 3:11, Romans 3:20

for our justification, [1.] and makes us the possessors of the righteousness of God through Him, that there is no room for any righteousness of our own in the ground of our salvation." [2.]

This justification through faith in Christ owes its origin to Paul, and is the outcome chiefly, of two factors which we have seen, his Jewish training, and his Christian experience. "The idea of justification itself was derived by the Apostle from the Rabbinic theology, whose doctrine of justification by the works of the Law is at once the antithesis and the necessary background of his own." [3.] Although there was along with the idea of Law as a contract between God and man, the idea of grace which qualifies the legalism of the Old Testament, the latter sinks altogether into the background. The Pharisaic doctrine implies that the Divine demands expressed in the Law can be satisfied, and that the fulfillment of them gives a claim to reward. The recognition of this claim is what is now meant by "justification." The conception is carried out in detail in that the Law is regarded atomically as the sum of the commandments it contains. The acts of obedience and those of transgression are entered in the heavenly books, the accounts

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1. Romans 4:25

2. Romans 10:3, Ephesians 2:8

3. Hastings, DOC, p. 917

being made up at death, with the decision resting upon the preponderance. If this is on the side of the good, the Divine sentence of justification follows, consisting in the declaration that the man is righteous.

In Paul "justification acquired a new meaning, becoming equivalent to acceptance before God, and the term righteousness was applied to the merciful acquittal of the guilty, but penitent offender." [1] Paul's view of God's judgment had been profoundly modified by his conversion. He had learned how impossible it was for man to attain to perfect righteousness, seeing that God claims not only obedience to the letter of the law, but an obedience of the heart too thorough to be attained by human infirmity. He knew that God is a loving Father in Christ ever seeking out his erring children, that he may win them back, ever ready to temper strict justice with infinite mercy, and waiting for the first response of even as imperfect faith and an imperfect repentence. Paul perceived that there is room in the judgment of God for another element beside strict judgment-----mercy, and that a prisoner, however clear may be his guilt on the evidence of his life, may nevertheless be assured of pardon and acceptance by throwing himself in humble trust on that mercy.

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1. Rendall, EGT, III, p. 164

It can be plainly seen that the whole idea in the Pharisaic theology, most distinctly, and in the Old Testament backgrounds is forensic. Righteousness before God and justification, whether looked for from the Divine grace, or on the ground of human merit, are, however, religious ideas. Righteousness is not sought for its own sake, as a moralist might seek it, but always as the condition of acceptance with God, and the blessings which flow from this, in this world or the next. It is at this point that the Pauline conception of justification by faith links itself on to the older theologies. What he has in view is always the question of acceptance with God, and his doctrine is the answer of his Christian experience to a problem which is set in the terms of the Pharisaic theology.

Paul's idea of justification seems to be essentially the same as the Pharisaic. Mankind is arraigned before the judgment-bar of God, and the justification which follows must be forensic. In Romans 4:5 justification is connected with imputation, a distinctly legal conception, and so far, Paul is in agreement with the Pharisees. Yet his conscience will not allow him to suppose that God can be satisfied with a mere preponderance of performance over transgression. For him to attain righteousness by

1. Moffatt, ibid. III, p. 164

the works of the Law would involve the complete fulfillment of it. But this is impossible, for all are sinners. [1.] Hence St. Paul concludes that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." [2.]

Here is the point where Paul introduced his doctrine, based on his personal experience of a new method of justification, of which the principle on God's side is grace---the free unmerited love of God[3.] and on the man's side faith. [4.] As proceeding from the Divine grace, justification by faith is totally opposed to justification by works, which depends on merit. [5.] Instead of attaining a righteousness by his own efforts, the believer submissively receives a righteousness which is wholly of God, and His gift.[6.]

This casts some light upon the Pauline conception of faith, for it is the method by which the grace of God is subjectively appropriated. In so far as the believer, instead of acting on his own

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1. Romans 3:23
2. Romans 3:20
3. Romans 3:24
4. Romans 1:17, 4:5
5. Romans 4:4
6. Romans 5:17, 10:3, Phillipians 3:7

initiative, allows himself to be determined by God,[1] faith is a species of obedience; thus Paul speaks of the obedience of faith.[2] But as correlative to grace, or the free love of God, faith is psychologically trust, a believing "on God."[3]

The revelation of the Divine grace which awakens faith takes place in the Person of Christ[4] and in his work, more especially in his death, but also in his resurrection. For its complete examination, justification requires both sides of the correlation, grace and faith, which in Paul's mind seem to be associated in the closest possible manner. The whole is really only one idea, and only thus can we explain the remarkable interchange of language which the apostle uses with respect to the two sides of the correlation. Thus he speaks of the revelation of the righteousness of God through faith,[5] but justification is generally associated more closely with faith, or the subjective side.[6]

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1. Romans 10:3
2. Romans 1:5
3. Romans 4:24
4. II Corinthians 5:19
5. Romans 1:17, 3:22
6. Romans 3:26, 5:1

Is the doctrine of justification by faith unique with Paul and the Christian religion? It has often been assumed that it is an idiosyncrasy of St. Paul, but if the Hebrew faith formed a worthy preparation for Christianity, we should expect that it would be rather familiar to Old Testament religion. It would seem that there scarcely could ever have been two entirely different ways of being saved, of entering into the fellowship of God----the self-renouncing faith and the way of meritorious achievement. The prayers for pardon and cleansing in the Psalter take it for granted. And similarly in Romans 3 and 4, St. Paul appeals to the fact that representative saints under the old covenant, such as Abraham, were justified by faith. Abraham's faith agrees with the Christian faith in not being a work, yielding merit; and God's relation to Abraham is not a relation of debt, but of grace. The patriarch had nothing to boast of, but abandoned himself to God. This faith attitude is one which is credited to men as righteousness, and represents to God the quality of soul which he longs to find, and which satisfies Him in men.

Although Paul made references to the patriarchs and the prophets in regard to their teaching and relation to God, yet it is with his name that the thought of justification by faith is associated, and

he made it his own. It became fashionable for a time to seek the kernel of the apostle's thinking anywhere than in justification. Various scholars have given a higher place to mystical elements, the operations of the Spirit, cosmic ideas of redemption, sacramental realism, and where justification by faith has not been ignored, it has been consigned to obscurity. But instead of disparaging it as a beggarly relic of Pharisaism, snatched up hastily in controversy, modern thought seems to be replacing it at the heart of Pauline thought.

This doctrine does not need an apology, but is Paul's evangelical message, not in part, but as a living whole. It is his chosen expression, and a thoroughly worthy one, of what the redeeming love in Christ has meant for him. Thus faith is conceived as the important factor in establishing "that union with Christ which means the sharing of His triumph and freedom." [1] It is as though a statement of the Gospel had been drawn from the nature of the Gospel itself, prolonging the good news which Jesus had announced. It necessarily follows then, that if "justification solely by faith is part of Jesus' message and of St. Paul's, we are entitled to regard it as

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1. Bulcock, PAPISP, p. 164

essentially bound up with the Christian religion." [1.]

Because of the fundamental nature of faith on the basis of New Testament teaching, it seems only natural to find that in Paul faith as the reception of a free gift is placed in sharpest contrast with any intrusion of human merit; it is natural to find that faith is sharply contrasted with works. In the book of Galatians, for instance, we have from beginning to end a mighty polemic in defense of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and as such this book has rightly been called "the Magna Charta of Christian liberty." [2.] It is interesting to note here that from the darkness of the 16th century, a man saw this Epistle, and the Reformation was born. One author has stated that the object of this letter was "to affirm faith in Jesus Christ as the essential gospel independent of the Jewish Law." [3.] It wasn't a case of contrasting the letter of the Law with the spirit of the Law, however, but contrasting the law of God with the Spirit of God. The Law is external, God's holy will to which we must conform, but it contains in itself no promise of its fulfillment. God's law brings death because of sin; but God's Spirit, applying to the soul the redemption offered by Christ, brings life.

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1. Mackintosh, CEF, p. 103

2. Machen, WIF, p. 183

3. Dow, ABC, 1207

Justification by faith alone makes our standing with God dependent, not at all upon what we have done, but altogether upon what God has done. If our salvation depended upon what we have done, then, according to Paul, we should still be bond-slaves, endeavoring feverishly to keep God's law so well that at the end we might possibly win his favor. This would be a hopeless endeavor because of the deadly guilt of sin, and would make men like debtors endeavoring to pay, but in the very effort getting deeper and deeper into debt. But as it is, God's favor is an absolutely free gift, bringing men into the right relation to himself, not on their own merit, but on the basis of the merit of Christ.

There are moral conditions to the faith about which Paul talked and taught. There are intellectual conditions of faith as well to be sure, for an individual not gifted with a rational nature could scarcely rise to such a faith. But neither Jesus or Paul promised the vision of God to the clever or the learned, but rather to the pure, the true and the simple. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." [1.] Everywhere faith is a possession, not of the sharp-witted, and the clear headed, but of the true-hearted and the loyal. Its closest associates are always a pure heart and a good

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1. Matthew 5:8

conscience. "War the good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith." [1] Faith arises in the context of duty and of goodness, and "it is never possible for a man to have a firmer hold upon God than he has upon duty." [2] These moral conditions of faith are often almost forgotten, but have an important place in such thinking.

Closely allied to the moral condition of faith is the importance of love, and this enters into Paul's dialectic because it had entered his own consciousness. With the appearance of Jesus in history as God's Son, living and dying and rising, Paul saw the beginning of the new and final order in which God is worshipped and trusted and served as a God of loving purpose and goodwill. This conviction shines through his most abstruse arguments about sin and the Law. The truth that Paul was talking about in his dialectic about Christianity and Judaism was expressed when Vinet said, "Faith does not consist in the belief that we are saved; it consists in the belief that we are loved." [3] Faith casts the human soul on the redeeming love of God which meets men in Jesus Christ. When a man becomes conscious of this

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1. I Timothy 1:18b-19
2. Baillie, ROR, p. 214
3. Moffatt, LINT, p. 141

devotion, he is more conscious of God's love, which intensifies life. This was true in the apostle's experience, for the peace and joy and strength which had come into his life were not due to the dialectic about the Law, but to the overwhelming emotion of God's love to him in Jesus.

Love, then, rather rounds out the elements of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, a love which was more than a joy and a delight to the apostle, but which was a wonder that thrilled him and humbled him. The moral element had surely not been overlooked, and with humility and a sense of duty and responsibility, which called for a repentent faith, the individual surrenders himself to the divine love of God in Jesus.

Summarizing, we see that justification by faith alone is the title to the doctrine that the sinful are received into sonship and peace with God, not because of any good works or holiness on their part, but only, and altogether because of God's infinite mercy, freely granted to all who in repentent faith cast themselves on his forgiving love in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 6

"Summary - The Influence"

If we were to compare and try to see the influence of one man's beliefs, as spoken or carried down in writing, upon the beliefs and ideas of another man, there would be several obvious sources to which we would turn. The first is the personal. Did one man know the other personally---did they meet and exchange views, or did the followers of one converse with t hose of the other, and so make known the differences or likenesses? Did the one study at the feet of the other?

A second source would be that of definite and certain influence. Did one study the writings or teachings of the other, and did he become an enthusiast for the particular school of thought? We would also have to ask whether they were schooled in the same traditions, and whether there were common influences on the lives and thinking of them both.

Then third, were the particular stimuli, the outward conditions and circumstances such that they would have encouraged a similarity of belief and conviction? Were the political, social, and moral conditions such that out of them were apt to emerge

a concept, which was similar to another which had arisen under similar conditions?

Or fourth, were there similarities in the two men, which transcended time and period, and strong spiritual influences which carried through centuries? We ask whether or not there was a carrying on, which led a later man to use the particular application of the truth of a belief to re-enforce his own belief in a particular situation. These, in brief, are several approaches upon which we must enlarge in order to summarize our study of two great figures and their conceptions.

The personal influence we dismiss at once, for Isaiah and Paul were separated by eight centuries, which makes such a thought impossible.

The second source we cannot dismiss so easily, for such influence might easily be transmuted through the barrier of years, and the influence felt and carried on by another. We are speaking about a prophet of a great religion, and an apostle of an even greater one, who had, however, been reared with a zeal for all things Jewish in his blood, and with an influence in his father's house which was likely to deepen this from year to year. Paul tells us that he forged ahead in Judaism beyond many of his own age and race, being exceedingly zealous for the

traditions of his fathers.[1.] We have briefly reviewed his rabbinical training, how thorough it was, how complete in its teaching of the Scripture, and the vast amount of memorization of text and interpretation which was required. The traditional interpretation of the text was considered the more important, and the memories of the students were stored with its expressions.

But we cannot trace back to find what exact material Gamaliel used in his "class lectures," or to what prophets of Israel he referred. Such studies are impossible, for time has destroyed evidence. Nor can we tell, in this particular case, how much Paul learned about Isaiah, or how deeply impressed he was by his prophecy and his beliefs. We cannot know what from Isaiah went into the preparation of Paul, but we can know what came from Paul in regard to the prophet, - what he wrote and said concerning him.

In four of Paul's letters we find references to Isaiah or his prophecies, and selections from the prophet, most of them in the Epistle to the Romans. In all there are 12 such references, which can be summarized briefly as follows:

Romans

9:27, 28 is from Isaiah 10:22, 23
9:29 is from Isaiah 1:9
9:33, 10:11 are from Isaiah 28:16, 8:14
11:8 is from Isaiah 29:10
11:26, 27 is from Isaiah 27:9
15:12 is from Isaiah 11:16

I Corinthians

1:19 is from Isaiah 29:14
15:32 is from Isaiah 22:13
15:54 is from Isaiah 25:8

Ephesians

6:14 is from Isaiah 11:5

II Thessalonians

2:8 is from Isaiah 11:4

Now, let us look at these for just a bit. What interesting facts which may help us in our search for sources do we find here? In the first place we notice that the quotations which the apostle uses are, for the most part, from the Septuagint. But there have been many variations made in the texts. For instance: in Romans 9:27, 28, there are verbal variations; 9:23 and 10:11 follow the Septuagint in general, but make deviations; 11:26, 27 are freely after the Septuagint; 15:12 is from the Septuagint with omissions, and so it goes. The apostle, while adopting the Greek terms of the Septuagint, gives a sense which agrees rather with the Hebrew than with our present Septuagint text; this fact can perhaps

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be best explained by the supposition that while he was accustomed to use the Greek version, his memory being stored with its expressions, in certain cases he followed familiar Aramaic translations, which he would hear in the Palestinian synagogues, or the talmudical schools, or certain modifications of Old Testament passages, which, as possible here, had become proverbial. An example of this is in I Corinthians 15:54, which comes from Isaiah 25:8. But this consideration of texts does not show the manner in which they were used. In Romans 15:12 Paul uses Isaiah 11:10 from the Septuagint, which refers to the delivery by a Davidic king. The apostle applies this as a conception which was fulfilled as to spiritual content in Jesus of Nazareth. Then I Corinthians 15:32 uses Isaiah 23:13 after the Septuagint. This was quoted by Isaiah as a quotation of the people during the siege of Sargon, when there was no hope for the future. Paul says that it was only natural for them and for others to say such things if there is no hope for the future life.

It was a case of clothing older words with new significance, and of using them to express new meanings. This was not a new thing to do for the prophets had done the same thing with "the day of Jehovah," and the Messianic hopes. And Paul saw in these very

familiar and meaningful statements of Isaiah's, rich meaning and significance for his day and situation. But before he could reinterpret and add meaning, he had to be very familiar with the prophet, and have a real sense and appreciation of his message. There had to be a deep immersion in the spirit and in the content of the prophet. There were traditions which were similar, and Paul saw in Isaiah's teaching elements which were pertinent and applicable to the situation in which he lived. In this regard we may be justified in tracing a definite and rather certain influence.

But this is even more noticeable when we consider the situations out of which they came, the prophet and the apostle. Is there any likelihood that the conditions, moral, social, or political, were favorable to similar concepts? If so, then we have grounds for comparison. This, we have done, and we have seen that these men were products of their ages, but also subject to the heritages which were theirs. Paul did not live during the times of Assyrian invasion and Egyptian intrigue, hence he did not think of faith in terms of non-violence and passivity. Nor did Isaiah live at the time of an emerging Christian community, when faith meant salvation by other means that mere human effort. It does not seem that we can trace to circumstances

and conditions the continuity and the influences of such a concept. We have seen that there are elements and that there are considerations, yet there remains to be found conclusive evidence - evidence which research appears to be unable to disclose. In its place we must put surmise, judgment, or even fiction, which are scarcely substitutes for truth and assurance.

But there seems yet another source, the fourth, which yields more fruitful results. And yet it is a way which in many respects demands a fore-knowledge of other methods and sources, but which proceeds from them out into another sphere. This sphere is in a more spiritual realm, and has to do with spiritual influences, which we may well call "a spiritual heritage." Paul's was a heritage rich with the Roman, Pharisaic, and Greek influences. His was the spirit immersed with the rich traditions of those who had gone before him, and his mental creativity was able to grasp and make his own the greatness and the spirituality of his illustrious predecessors. When we compare him with Isaiah, we see that there were similarities in the two men which did transcend the differences of time and period. There were not necessarily similarities in method and approach, but rather likenesses in the spirit of their work, in the importance of their mission, and in the consciousness

of their ministries. Cannot we see s definite carrying on of great ideals and of a high purpose for men in their relation to God, in the latter case, as shown to men in Jesus Christ? Perhaps this spiritual heritage may be seen in one or two specific instances. First, look at I Corinthians 1:19, in which Isaiah 29:14 is quoted. The apostle here makes of God's dealing with the unholy wisdom of Judah at this particular time a general principle of divine action. But more especially is this a special reference to those methods of salvation originated by man; in other words, those in opposition to salvation by pure faith. Consider next Paul's use in Romans 9:33 and 10:11 of Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14. "Israel, says the apostle further, had failed to reach God's true law of righteousness, because they sought it, not by faith but by works; they had not apprehended the wisdom of God's salvation in Jesus Christ, who had become a stone of stumbling to them." [1.] And so as a prediction of their spiritual blindness and failure, Paul cites these passages from Isaiah, deviating from the Septuagint slightly. The fundamental ideas in the two are blended together in Paul, and given the Messianic interpretation which was common in his day, which is so far valued as the spiritual principle

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1. Toy, QINT, p. 144

announced by the prophet. Paul gives this valuable heritage new meaning when he finds new illustrations in every manifestation, the most striking being the last and highest in Jesus Christ.

Paul takes the prophetic vision, and finds fulfillment of it in Christ, [1.] and states that the consummation of the words of the prophet shall come to pass in the further development and amplification of his concepts which have been carried on, and even redeemed. In Romans 9:27, 28, quoting Isaiah 10: 22, 23, we find Paul making further use of a heritage, which was an important part, as we have seen of the prophet's concept of faith - the remnant. The apostle points out that the remnant was the heir and the agent of salvation, and that the prophet had recognized the working of the principle of selection. He then goes on to show how the Gentiles who had not consciously pursued righteousness had laid hold of it, while Israel, always in pursuit of a law which was to produce righteousness, had never caught it up. Israel sought to earn by merit, the Gentiles were ready to accept on the ground of faith. A remarkable enlargement of a concept, adding to it the color and the vibrancy of a new amplification, but maintaining the eternal religious element and spiritual significance, faith. The important and far-reaching spiritual

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1. Romans 15:45, quoting from Isaiah 25:8

heritage is being carried on, and the influence of the prophet given scope and breadth and depth in the vividness and clarion clarity of the apostle.

Let us examine in greater detail the concepts of faith which were Isaiah's and Paul's, and after taking them up by items, perhaps we can come to further conclusions. Let us look first from the standpoint of the prophet.

We have seen that Isaiah was the first one to formulate faith as the condition of salvation. He traced back the moral and religious problems of his people to the one underlying principle of faith, and it was Paul who proclaimed the universality of faith as the condition of salvation. In the former, a good many of the political aspects of the development are dealt with, but faith as the condition of salvation transcends political systems and situations, and in Paul the personal aspects of it are particularly stressed. The forms under which it was conceived were very different, but the underlying principle, faith, was and is the same.

Duhm has said that Isaiah 7:9 is the earliest passage which lays stress on faith, and that the religious principle of faith hadn't been exhibited as a touchstone of character and destiny before this. In Paul this is carried farther, and we see faith on

man's side, and the grace of God on the divine side. Thus justification by faith makes man's standing with God not dependent upon what he has done, but upon his receptivity, and what God has done for him. Then further, through the words of the prophet we see the attempts to recover independence on the part of the state, and it is pointed out that the way to safety lies in quiet resignation to the divine will. There is a renunciation of earthly help, as opposed to divine help. For the apostle righteousness is not gained by effort, but rather the believer submissively receives it from God. Like Isaiah, Paul was a seeker after God, and his quest was to find God and gain his favor. His trust in the Law condemned him. The easier way for him would have been to conform to the life and the strength of Judaism. Yet he would not conform to the belief in meritorious achievement on the part of the individual, but sought, rather, to transform the relationship by faith. Likewise the easy way for Isaiah would have been to conform to the methods of national and international proceedure, and resort to earthly help in the form of military force, but like his spiritual follower and debtor, he rather transformed the situation, and found in calm reliance on God the truest strength and character.

In the case of Isaiah, it was faith contrasted with political intrigue; while with Paul, it was faith contrasted with human merit. In both, in general terms, it was the renunciation of earthly help as opposed to divine help.

Then, from the standpoint of the apostle, let us look at it further. Paul saw that man's relation to God was not as a bargain, and that there was no confidence, no satisfaction or assurance with the Law. And Isaiah had earlier found that there was no confidence, no calmness or assurance with a lack of faith. Paul had found another truth amplified in his experience, and this became part of the burden of his message. This was that it is impossible to attain ideals by mere human endeavor. Similarly Isaiah had found that it is impossible to fight against God, for as in 31:3, allies are men and not God, and horses are flesh and not spirit. And the residue of the teaching of both men revealed the mercy, as well as the justice of God. Paul went further than it was possible to go in Judaism at any period and taught that to establish union with Christ by faith means a sharing of his triumph and freedom.

When we consider the moral conditions of faith, we think of the qualities of loyalty and of truth and duty in Paul's teaching, but we also think of that rare quality of "staith," which G. A. Smith has told

us of in Isaiah. And the bonds of fellowship, which drew those together who by their faith and through God's grace found salvation, have worthy precedence in the circles of fellowship of the faithful. In addition to the belief in the mercy of God, as well as his justice, we see in the apostle a stress on the importance of the divine love, and a surrendering of the self to that love. This was an even more searching method of stating the necessity of faith, as man's part, to be supplemented by grace, the perfect love of God.

Summarizing, we may gather together the essentials of the early concept of faith and its spiritual inheritor in a single question, "What is the way to security?" When we answer that, we have answers which are applicable to the particular and peculiar circumstances of the two men but which still have the same common and basic conception in them, that of faith. For the answer is that the way to security is not in what is to be done, it is rather in the attitude. When we think through the implications of this, we shall see that in the case of Isaiah this was true, in that Israel must not depend for her salvation upon her prowess and external abilities, but rather upon her attitude of faith and trust in God according to the highest revelation which she had -

through the prophet. When we consider the apostle Paul, we see that the same thing is basically true in his case, for it isn't what men do, but rather whether they believe and have faith in God's grace for their salvation. The answers to this question, then, reveal an influence and heritage of a supreme and exceedingly spiritual type. We see the sort of succession and enlargement of ideas, and ideals and concepts which transcend races, empires, and religious faiths.

The concept of faith becomes increasingly a confidence - trust in spiritual forces. As God is a Spirit, so Faith in God means a Faith in Spirit and spiritual forces - a trust in goodness and righteousness, and ultimate elevation and redemption of things as they are now. The concepts are shot through with a spirit of optimism, and so faith, this correlation to grace in Paul, is active and enthusiastic. There are interesting psychological aspects to the conceptions of faith, which are of real significance. With the prophet faith is psychological trust - the means of gaining peace and rest, which are only possible through a lack of fear. This difference can be seen in the end of that conversation between Isaiah and Ahaz, for the one with faith left poised, certain, and unshaken because of his faith, while he who was

putting his trust in force and hate and death went from the meeting with faintness and trembling because he was afraid, and did not have faith - psychological trust.

In the case of the apostle the truth was carried even further, and Paul spoke to defeatists, those who had become disillusioned and fearful. He wrote to those who harbored fears and misgivings, and who had lost faith in others and in God, and so sought by their own powers to maintain their own lives and salvations. There seems to be a reasonable progression in the two lines of thought, the fear that God wouldn't take care of them as a nation, and the fear that God couldn't provide for them in a personal and intimate way. A key word to the situations which the two leaders faced is fear - fear of consequences, and the absence of faith in the goodness and power of spiritual forces - God's ability to sustain and keep his people.

Directly associated with this is the appropriation of the righteousness of God through the pure receptivity of faith. Although there is a difference between the Old and New Testaments in regard to the availability of God and his resources, in their particular ways these two great leaders emphasized the appropriating of the resources of God through faith.

If a second question were to be asked in summarizing the essentials of the concepts of faith, in addition to the one already stated, "What is the way to security?" it would be, "Over against what did the concept of faith arise?" In answering this, we define rather clearly for ourselves and others the backgrounds out of which the concepts arose, and hence their stresses and importance. In the case of Isaiah, we see that faith for him arose over against non-spiritual means and forces, and so was elaborated and taught to correct this. In the case of Paul, his concept arose over against the legalistic conceptions, which arose in the emerging Christian church. As has been previously said, this latter became for the apostle everything that the former had been to his spiritual predecessor, with the addition of the added driving force of the power of the risen Lord. This is true of the apostle's ideas and efforts as a whole. He had the Pharisaic heritage and fire. He had the impetus of the prophets, as they fought for righteousness and faith, but in addition, he had the flaming zeal of Christ, which drove him on with vigor and ardor beyond human understanding. He lived and talked and thought Christ, and faith in his way of life. And so this conception of faith as the means of salvation became more powerful than the forces of morals and ethics could have made it. Paul preached

faith as the condition of salvation, over against non-spiritual means, as Isaiah did, but in addition, he preached it for the sake of Christ, without faith in whom, man was spiritually dead and lifeless.

Then, faith became for Paul an optimistic, believing attitude toward the future, which it had not been fully for Isaiah. It was as a New Testament writer expressed it: "assurance of things hoped for," [1] It was a keeping hold of intangible realities of the spiritual life, even when the worth could not be felt, and when the glow was gone. It was "conviction of things not seen," [2]

The conditions of faith which Isaiah felt, and which Paul later enlarged, are not alien to us, but are being carried on, and the spiritual heritage did not end with the apostle. We are reminded of this in the words of a young soldier of the war: "We realize at the Front that the issues of life and death aren't in our hands.....But just because we do the only right thing and realize that everything else is out of our power, there comes to us a peace of mind and a content. We take the one step and trust the rest....It is the beginning of the peace of God." [3]

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1. Hebrews 11:1

2. Hebrews 11:1

3. Young, Maj. W. P., A Soldier to the Church, p. 133, quoted in ROR, p. 30

"The Peace of God" in the words of Donald Hankey, "which passeth all understanding simply comes from not worrying about results, because they are God's business and not ours." [1] Shades of the past, noble traditions which are being carried on, and which live for us because of this timeliness as well as timelessness of them. "----we realize....that the issues aren't in our hands...." Doesn't it sound like, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength;" Or like "The righteous shall live by faith;" The one step is taken, and then with an absence of fear, and with a dependence upon the resources of God, with faith and trust, the future is awaited. Then it is that there comes the peace of God.

But neither Isaiah nor his spiritual legatee, Paul, overlooked that first step, and the faith which they lived for and died in was a faith which was born of a dutiful devotion to their appointed tasks, and an unwavering loyalty to their highest values. It was what Tennyson has called the "faith that comes of self-control."

And so we close this study of faith with the realization that the heights and depths of it are yet to be discovered in experience. We cannot help but

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1. A Student in Arms, Second Series Pocket Edition, p. 156, quoted in ROR, p. 30

feel that the legacy of faith from the beacon of the eighth century before Christ to the peak of the first century after Christ is of great spiritual importance and significance to those who have taken Jesus seriously in his words to men to take up their crosses and follow him. And it is felt that this challenge to living and preaching will go beyond the limits of superficial living and surface thinking, until men and women everywhere will drop their fears, and worries, and will rise to the heights of triumphant faith, purged of the narrow and the non-spiritual, and radiant in the faith of Isaiah made perfect in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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